

Former residents, students flock to Carthage for anniversary

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CARTHAGE — Alumni gathered in Carthage over the weekend to say hello to old friends and reminisce about yesteryear.

Sporting white and purple T-shirts bearing the words “I’m from the old school” were dozens of alumni who came back to Carthage to not only take part in the all-school reunion, but to celebrate the town’s 125th anniversary.

Among them were Calvin and Veronica Jones, of Iroquois, who were childhood sweethearts who graduated from Carthage High School in 1960. They married and moved to California, where they lived for 27 years before deciding to move to Iroquois.

The Joneses joined hundreds of others who spent the weekend in Carthage celebrating the town’s 125th anniversary. The celebration began Friday and concluded Sunday with a Community Church Service.

“They did a wonderful job of organizing it,” said Mrs. Jones.

The couple took part in almost every aspect of the festivities.

A weekend highlight for Mr. Jones was singer Donna Chapel, of Nashville, Tenn., who performed Friday afternoon. Chapel was a backup singer and a step-daughter to country singer Tammy Wynette. She’s performed in the area before.

She put on a very good show,” said Mr. Jones. “In fact, all the entertainment has been wonderful.”

The Joneses watched the play “Treachery

at Cartilage Creek,” which was put on by the Carthage Players. The play, too, was very well done, the couple said.

Saturday, the Joneses and former Carthage student Virginia Nagelhout of Wessington, set out their lawn chairs near the Carthage City Hall and watched a parade, which included dozens of old and new tractors, as well as floats from alumni and businesses. This year’s parade theme was “Remember When.”

Naghelout, a graduate from the 1954 class, said Carthage has not lost its hometown appeal.

“There were some more businesses and more things for us to do than there are today,” Nagelhout said, but added: “Has Carthage lost its charm? I don’t think so.”

After Saturday’s parade, festival-goers walked through a historic exhibit at the Carthage Library — put on by Alan Windedahl of Carthage — watched a 10-minute film on the town’s history and strolled through the Campbell Original Straw Bale Built Museum.

Elaine Rickard, of St. Charles, Minn., formerly of Carthage, was one of hundreds of people making their way through the museum Saturday. Like the others, Rickard, a 1952 graduate of Carthage High School, came back to celebrate the town’s anniversary and take part in the celebration.

Because of her schedule, Rickard was only able to see the parade and the museum. She did run into some old friends.

She was also surprised by how far Car-

thage has come and how it's changed.

"It's grown," Rickard said, of her hometown.
"They have fixed it up. It's a different place."

Rickard was impressed by the museum, which is dedicated to preserving South Dakota's past. The museum's building is also insulated by South Dakota-grown straw.

Rickard used one word to sum up her weekend.

"Wonderful," she said.

For the younger crowd, Saturday's events included sack races, egg races and a sanctioned pedal pull for children ages 4-11. An ugly pickup contest, a cow plop game, big tractor games and slow tractor races rounded out Saturday's activities.